



MONTANA

OFFICE OF TOURISM

TOURISM MARKETING PLAN
JULY 2009 – DECEMBER 2010

JUNE 5, 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview	1
Target Audience: The Geotraveler	2
Montana Office of Tourism FY10 Budget Overview	3
Montana Office of Tourism Organizational Overview	4
Montana Office of Tourism Goals and Objectives.....	6
July 2009 - Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan Priorities	7
July 2009 - Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan Overview.....	8
Montana Office of Tourism Program Marketing Plans.....	9
BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER	
Consumer Marketing	10
Electronic Marketing.....	13
Public Relations	16
Publications	19
Visitor Information Systems	22
BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS/NICHE	
Overseas Marketing	25
Group Travel Marketing	29
PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT	
Branding Initiative	32
Tourism Development and Education	35
Public Information	39
OPERATIONS	
Operations and Industry Services	42
Contact Center	44
Appendix: Background and Industry Insight	50

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Montana Office of Tourism has developed the July 2009 – Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan keeping in mind its mission statement, the *Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012* and the recently developed Montana brand platform.

MISSION STATEMENT

The July 2009 – Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan reflects the Montana Office of Tourism's mission to strengthen Montana's economy through the promotion of the state as a vacation destination. As noted in the mission statement: by maximizing the combined talents and abilities of its staff, and with guidance from the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council, the Montana Office of Tourism strives to promote a quality experience to visitors while encouraging preservation of Montana's environment and quality of life.

MONTANA TOURISM AND RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2012

It's important to note that a large portion of the Montana Office of Tourism's assigned actions fall under Goal One of the *Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012*. Goal One is to "increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors."

That being said, the Montana Office of Tourism has actionable responsibilities for each of the ten goals outlined in the *Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012* and is continuing to take and track specific actions according to that plan, as noted in the individual program marketing plans in this document.

MONTANA BRAND PLATFORM

Through the brand development process, the Montana Office of Tourism is working to unite the efforts of the various entities marketing the state with a more cohesive voice based on the following brand platform:

- + More spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48
- + Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders
- + Breathtaking experiences by day and relaxing hospitality at night

OVERVIEW OF THE TOURISM MARKETING PLAN

Based on the aforementioned responsibilities with its focus on consumer-facing marketing from both an organizational and budgetary outlook, the Montana Office of Tourism has developed three division goals and corresponding objectives for July 2009 through Dec. 2010. In addition, the Montana Office of Tourism has specified four strategic priorities that support these three division goals and objectives.

TARGET AUDIENCE: THE GEOTRAVELER

Based upon the Montana brand attributes, the target audience for visiting the state is an emerging segment called the geotraveler. This group numbers 55 million in the United States alone.

National Geographic defines geotourism as: *Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of the place being visited including its environment, culture, heritage, landmarks and the well-being of its residents.*

- + Geotravelers focus on the experience of the destination – not on checking off a list of must-see attractions. You won't see geotravelers cutting off a conversation with a local because they're late for the theme park.
- + Geotravelers seek the authenticity of people and places. This is something that every corner of Montana is steeped in. These travelers want to discover experiences that can't be found anywhere else. They want to sit in the stands at a small-town rodeo and buy fresh huckleberries from a local farmer at the farmers market. That's why they came here.
- + Geotravelers have multi-faceted interests and will take in a number of attractions during a vacation so long as they are authentic to the culture they are visiting. Their experiences often include signature moments – from hiking Logan Pass to the equally memorable museum and corner café in Glasgow. (And by the way, they loved that scenic drive, too.)

THE GEOTRAVELERS' CHOICE OF TRAVEL DESTINATION IS AFFECTED BY:

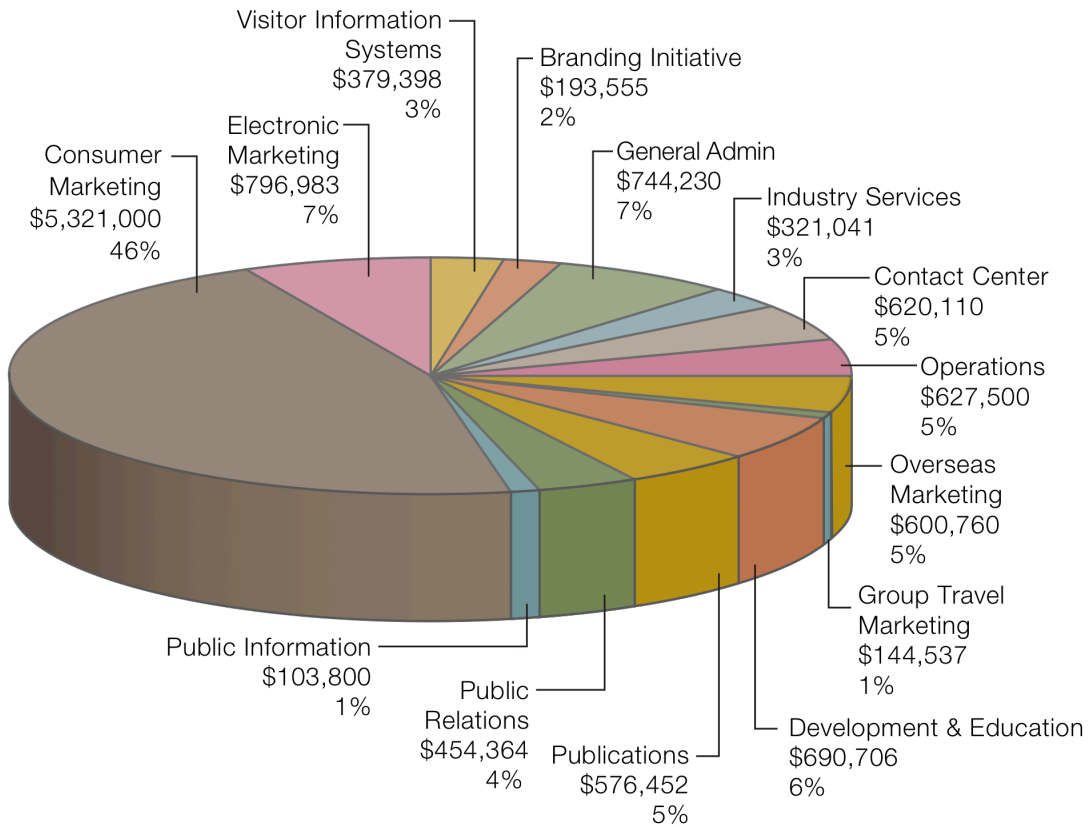
- + Their desire to customize their experiences and create their own personal connections when traveling.
- + An emphasis on making the most of every moment due to the lack of time in their day-to-day lives.
- + The pervasive nature of technology in planning their travels and exploring their destinations before they arrive.
- + An interest in immersing themselves in the culture.
- + The ability to get off the beaten path.
- + The capacity to get out of their comfort zone.
- + Their desire to live on a healthy planet.

PSYCHOGRAPHICALLY AND DEMOGRAPHICALLY, GEOTRAVELERS:

- + Are well educated.
- + Are environmentally aware.
- + Have a strong preference for cultural and social aspects of travel.
- + Are socially conscious.
- + Travel frequently (minimum of three trips per year).
- + Spend a disproportionate amount of their income on travel compared to other travelers.
- + Come from various age groups and income ranges.

MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM FY10 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The Montana Office of Tourism FY10 tourism marketing budget is \$11,574,436. Funding for this office is through a statutory appropriation of a portion of the 4% lodging facilities use tax. It should be noted that no additional funding for this office comes from Montana's general fund. The dollar amount and percentage of overall budget for each of the programs are shown below.



MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

In its approach to the July 2009 – Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan, the Montana Office of Tourism has created an organizational structure that groups the individual programs into the following four categories: business-to-consumer; business-to-business/niche; product/brand development; and operations.

1. BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER

TARGET AUDIENCE: The geotraveler/vacationing consumer

PROGRAMS INCLUDE: Consumer Marketing, Electronic Marketing, Public Relations, Publications, Contact Center and Visitor Information Systems

Consumer-facing programs that focus on reaching and attracting the individual traveler to Montana.

2. BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS/NICHE

TARGET AUDIENCE: Group tour operators and international booking agencies

PROGRAMS INCLUDE: Overseas Marketing, Group Travel Marketing

Business-facing and niche programs that conduct outreach to businesses and individuals who plan group travel; also includes international marketing.

3. PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT

TARGET AUDIENCE: The tourism industry, including the Montana Office of Tourism, with its focus being product and brand development to ensure that Montana is delivering on its brand promise

PROGRAMS INCLUDE: Branding Initiative, Tourism Development and Education, Visitor Information Systems (Special Events Grant Program), Public Information

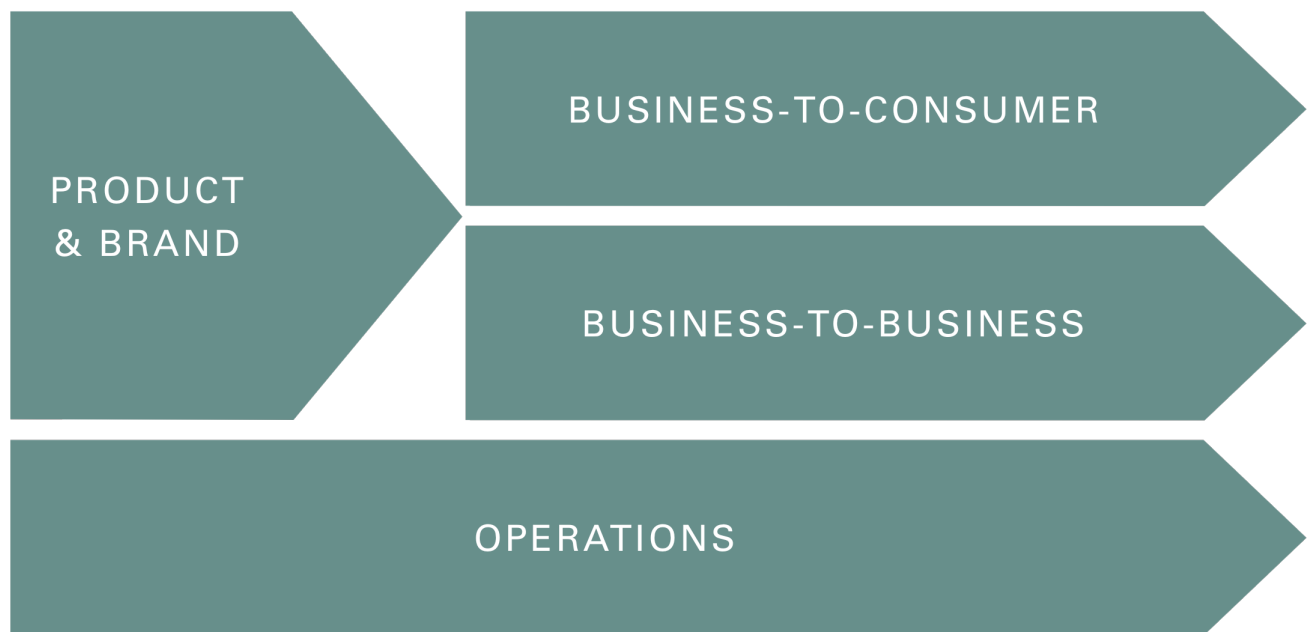
Internal programs that educate stakeholders about the brand, support stakeholder marketing and development efforts and identify product attributes, in coordination with tourism partners, that the target consumer desires.

4. OPERATIONS

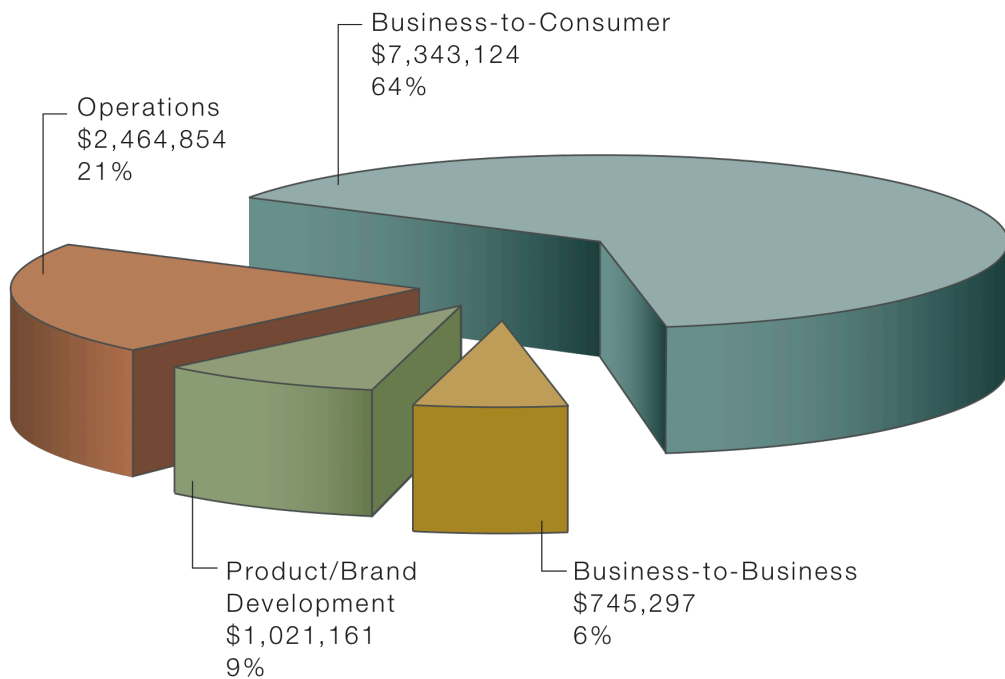
TARGET: The Montana Office of Tourism and the internal tourism constituency: the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC), the Regions and CVBs, private businesses and other governmental agencies

PROGRAMS INCLUDE: Operations and Industry Services, Contact Center, Electronic Marketing, Public Information

Internal operation programs that collect and distribute operational information that keeps all parties communicating and in-sync; a support function to the other three categories and tourism stakeholders.



The dollar amount and percentage of overall budget for each of the organization's four categories are shown below.



MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Montana Office of Tourism has outlined the following three division goals and corresponding objectives for July 2009 through Dec. 2010.

DIVISION GOAL 1

INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE BRAND AMONG THE TARGET AUDIENCE

- + OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the target audience's awareness of the brand by 3% by Jan. 2011

DIVISION GOAL 2

MOVE MONTANA INTO THE TARGET AUDIENCE'S CONSIDERATION SET

- + OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the target audience's intent to travel to Montana by 2% by Jan. 2011

DIVISION GOAL 3

SUPPORT MONTANA TOURISM ENTITIES IN INCREASING THEIR REVENUES

- + OBJECTIVE 3: Support the return of annual, non-resident expenditures in 2010 to the 2005 level of \$3.037 billion

Note: Percentage increases for Objectives 1 and 2 are based on the baseline brand awareness study conducted by the Leisure Trends Group on behalf of the Montana Office of Tourism in Feb. 2009. These percentages will be finalized by Sept. 2009, based on outcomes of planning sessions with advertising and media planning agencies.

JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010 TOURISM MARKETING PLAN PRIORITIES

The Montana Office of Tourism has specified the following four strategic priorities for July 2009 through Dec. 2010. The first three priorities support the division goals and objectives, and the fourth priority ensures that the goals and objectives can be measured and tracked. These priorities align with the *Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012* as outlined below and are referenced throughout the program marketing plans.

DIVISION PRIORITY 1 (P1):

CONSUMER: Create a comprehensive, four-season and integrated consumer-facing marketing campaign that attracts the target audience to Montana

RATIONALE: Stay focused on the five-year Strategic Plan and the core geotraveler target.

Supports Goal One of the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

DIVISION PRIORITY 2 (P2):

CONSUMER/INTERACTIVE: Create an integrated strategy for interactive media that incorporates social networking opportunities and resonates with the target audience

RATIONALE: The geotraveler relies heavily on online resources for researching travel.

Supports Goal One of the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

DIVISION PRIORITY 3 (P3):

PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION: Help identify the unique, and perhaps lesser-known, attributes of the Montana brand and promote those attributes including but not limited to: tribal communities, off-the-beaten path areas (e.g., Montana's High Plains), arts and culture and other geotraveler-centric experiences; also helps highlight shoulder-season opportunities

RATIONALE: Geotrailers are interested in the culture and sense of place of the area that they visit.

Supports Goal Four of the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history.

DIVISION PRIORITY 4 (P4):

OPERATIONS/KPIs (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS): Develop and implement necessary measurement tools and tracking system

RATIONALE: Relevant tools will help determine benchmarks and measure success of the July 2009 – Dec. 2010 Tourism Marketing Plan.

Supports Goal One of the Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors.

JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010 TOURISM MARKETING PLAN OVERVIEW



DIVISION PRIORITY 1 (P1):

Consumer: Create a comprehensive, four-season and integrated consumer-facing marketing campaign that attracts the target audience to Montana

DIVISION PRIORITY 2 (P2):

Consumer/Interactive: Create an integrated strategy for interactive media that incorporates social networking opportunities and resonates with the target audience

DIVISION PRIORITY 3 (P3):

Product Identification: Help identify the unique, and perhaps lesser-known, attributes of the Montana brand and promote those attributes

DIVISION PRIORITY 4 (P4):

Operations/KPI (Key Performance Indicators): Develop and implement necessary measurement tools and tracking system

MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM PROGRAM MARKETING PLANS

The following section provides a complete marketing plan for each of the Montana Office of Tourism programs. Each plan follows this format:

OVERVIEW

Provides an overview of the current program.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT

Outlines the goals and actions from the *Montana Tourism and Recreation Strategic Plan 2008-2012* that this program supports.

FY10 BUDGET

Defines the dollar amount of the budget for each individual program as well as the percentage as it relates to the total Montana Office of Tourism FY10 budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010

Are specific and measurable with a definite purpose in mind.

STRATEGIES

Are the big-picture plan of what the program is going to do from July 2009 through Dec. 2010 to achieve the division goals and program objectives.

ACTIONS

Are the individual actions/projects that will be put in place to support the strategies; each action also includes a timeline and what other programs support the action (as appropriate).

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Outlines the public-public and/or public-private partnership opportunities that each program is providing in the next fiscal year.

CALENDAR

Highlights the major events that are relevant to the program throughout the next fiscal year.

BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER: CONSUMER MARKETING

OVERVIEW:

The Consumer Marketing program is responsible for promoting the state to first-time and return visitors as a travel destination to domestic travelers, ensuring that the significant economic benefit from out-of-state visitors continues to grow. The program develops marketing campaigns and promotions that clearly communicate the state's brand and the benefits of a unique travel experience in Montana. Marketing efforts are designed to increase awareness of Montana, increase travel intention from our target audience, and increase the number of trips to Montana.

From July 2009 through Dec. 2010, one of the division's top four priorities is to create a comprehensive, four-season and integrated consumer-facing marketing campaign that attracts the target audience to Montana. Consumer Marketing will work with other consumer-facing programs including Electronic Marketing, Public Relations and Publications to address this priority.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.1 – Implement highly targeted consumer advertising and promotion campaigns, based on strategic marketing plans, and track/report results
- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

GOAL 10: Build an effective "team" to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results

- + Action 10.5 – Obtain strategic research to inform tourism marketing, development and policy decisions

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Consumer Marketing is \$5,321,000, representing approximately 46% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Increase the target audience's awareness of the brand by 3% by Jan. 2011
- + Increase the target audience's intent to travel to Montana by 2% by Jan. 2011

Note: Percentage increases for Objectives 1 and 2 are based on the baseline brand awareness study conducted by the Leisure Trends Group on behalf of the Montana Office of Tourism in Feb. 2009. These percentages will be finalized by Sept. 2009, based on outcomes of the planning sessions with advertising and media planning agencies

STRATEGIES:

- a. Implement an integrated, first-time visitor brand awareness campaign focusing on key travel planning months to increase target audience's awareness of Montana as a travel destination. Create comprehensive campaign analytics to monitor and measure the campaign. **Division Goal: 1.** (Supports P1, P2 and P4)
- b. Implement an integrated, return-visitor campaign to attract regional out-of-state travelers to Montana and keep Montana residents traveling within the state. Create comprehensive campaign analytics to monitor and measure the campaign. **Division Goal: 2.** (Supports P1, P2, P3 and P4)
- c. Develop an integrated, interactive strategy in conjunction with other consumer-facing programs that incorporates consumer marketing campaigns and programs with the Montana Office of Tourism's ongoing digital presence and provides the target audience with information needed to include Montana in their travel consideration set. **Division Goals: 1 and 2.** (Supports P1, P2, P3 and P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Create a comprehensive, unique and measureable 18-month first-time visitor brand marketing plan in coordination with the marketing and media agency partners. The plan will promote the brand attributes to the target audience differentiating Montana from its competitors and building brand awareness. *Also supports Strategy C.* **Timeline:** Start in June 2009. **Support Programs:** WEB, PR, PUB, INTL, GRP, VIS, ADMIN and IS. (Supports P1, P2 and P4).
 - Continue to include key markets and a national presence in plan
 - Conduct planning meeting with marketing and media partners
 - Create a measurement plan that includes conducting primary research (e.g. awareness research studies, web analytics) and utilizing secondary (e.g. ITRR) data to monitor target audience trends and measure campaign results. Results should be easily and readily available for tourism partners, including Regions and CVBs
 - Develop a scoring matrix for emerging key markets and monitor current key markets
 - Integrate a digital communications strategy for first-time visitors, including mechanisms to gather/grow contact information through campaigns and communicate via email with audience

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Create a comprehensive, unique and measureable 18-month return-visitor marketing plan in coordination with the marketing and media agency partners. The plan will promote the brand's deeper story, specifically communicating Montana experiences throughout the year, to the target audience differentiating Montana from its competitors and building intent to travel. *Also supports Strategies A through C.* **Timeline:** Start in June 2009. **Support Programs:** WEB, PR, PUB, INTL, GRP, VIS, ADMIN AND IS. (Supports P1, P2, P3 and P4).
 - Continue to include regional key markets and in-state presence
 - Conduct planning meeting with marketing and media partners
 - Include co-op opportunities through campaign to tourism partners, including Regions, CVBs and Tourism Business Improvement Districts. Opportunities with costs and deadlines will be outlined on www.travelmontana.mt.gov/programs
 - Create measurement plan that includes conducting primary research (e.g. contracted research, web analytics) and utilizing secondary (e.g. ITRR) data to monitor visitor interests, planning and trip behavior identifying priority areas and emerging opportunities for campaigns as well as measuring campaign results. Results should be easily and readily available for tourism partners, including Regions and CVBs
 - Communicate specific experiences travelers could have that take place throughout the year, including shoulder seasons
 - Develop a scoring matrix for emerging key markets and monitor current key markets

- Integrate a digital communications strategy for return visitors, including mechanisms to gather/grow contact information through campaigns and communicate via email with audience

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + Collaborate with E-Marketing, Public Information and Public Relations to develop, launch and track an integrated interactive marketing program. **Timeline:** June 2009. **Support Programs:** WEB, PR and PIO. (Supports P1 and P2 and P4)
 - Optimize visitmt.com for primary and secondary audiences and users
 - Communicate with target audience through online and social media tactics
 - Leverage word-of-mouth opportunities presented by return visitors
- + Work with eROI to establish an email marketing strategy that proactively promotes the Montana brand and its unique attributes to first-time visitors and continues communication with return visitors. *Also supports Strategies A and B.* **Timeline:** July 2009. **Support Program:** WEB. (Supports P1, P2, P3 and P4)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + See Actions under Strategy B for details.

CALENDAR:

To be finalized based on strategy development.

BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER AND OPERATIONS: ELECTRONIC MARKETING

OVERVIEW:

Electronic Marketing utilizes traditional interactive and emerging technologies to develop innovative systems for disseminating Montana travel information and to help define and reinforce the Montana brand. These technologies include interactive websites, mobile applications and social media. The foundation of the Montana Office of Tourism's Electronic Marketing program is our "Tourism" database. This is an extensive database of tourism-related information, from resorts to rodeos. We work closely with our communities and business partners to gather this information. This cost-effective method of disseminating travel information gives consumers the ability to obtain comprehensive Montana travel information "instantly" from anywhere in the world.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.1 – Implement highly targeted consumer advertising and promotion campaigns, based on strategic marketing plans, and track/report results

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Electronic Marketing is \$796,983, representing approximately 7% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Increase time spent on visitmt.com by 2%, page views by 2% and conversions by 5%.
- + Demonstrate increased awareness of the Montana brand among target audience by increase of 20% of unique visitors to visitmt.com.
- + Develop a mobile base of at least 5,000 users.
- + Have 250 packages and coupons on visitmt.com.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Create an integrated digital strategy, with short- and long-term goals for the Montana Office of Tourism, and the interactive media roadmap to support those goals. **Division Goals 1, 2 and 3. (P2)**
- b. Collaborate with other consumer-facing programs to develop an integrated interactive strategy that incorporates consumer marketing elements online and increases target audience's conversion to Montana. **Division Goal: 2. (P1 and P2)**

- c. Support Montana tourism entities in increasing their revenues by offering online electronic products and services and booking opportunities that benefit Montana businesses and provide helpful information to consumers. **Division Goal 3. (P2)**
- d. Develop a coordinated and archivable tracking system for key performance indicators to establish ongoing trend analysis. **(Supports P4)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Conduct an Integrated Interactive Strategy Review and determine best steps for achieving division goals and objectives from an interactive, consumer-facing strategic approach.
Timeline: September 2009. **Support Program:** CM. (P2)
 - + Based on outcomes of the Integrated Interactive Strategy Review, develop a mobile application strategy for the 3.5 billion mobile phones and devices, worldwide, and provide opportunities for organizing, communications, and service and information delivery.
 - o Develop a mobile application to find lodging by city. **Timeline:** June 2010. **Support Program:** CM. (P2)
 - o Develop a mobile application to view current ski conditions. **Timeline:** October 2010. **Support Program:** CM. (P2)
 - o Develop a mobile-enabled version of visitmt.com. **Timeline:** March 2010. **Support Program:** CM. (P2)
 - + Determine whether increasing traffic at montanakids.com fits in overall strategy; if it does, then develop partnerships with communities and existing organizations that encourage children to participate in “outdoor” activities. (Supports P1)
 - o Develop a contest for kids on montanakids.com that encourages them to get outside. **Timeline:** TBD. **Support Programs:** CM, PIO. (Supports P1 and P2)
- + Conduct a digital infrastructure audit to optimize resources spent on electronic marketing. **Timeline:** April 2010. **Support Programs:** CM, IS. (P2)
- + After completion of interactive infrastructure audit, identify and implement preferred hosting platform. **Timeline:** December 2010. **Support Program:** CM. (P2)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Based on outcomes of the Integrated Interactive Strategy Review, determine and execute website enhancements that are relevant to the target audience and complement other consumer-facing program initiatives. Tactics may include:
 - + Provide target audience with online tools to assist in planning their travels
 - + Completely integrate wintermt.com into visitmt.com. **Timeline:** October 2009. **Support Program:** CM. (P1 and P2)
 - + Enhance transportation section of visitmt.com to emphasize that Montana can be very accessible – e.g., Montana ski areas are more accessible than similar sites in Colorado like Vail and Aspen. **Timeline:** December 2009. **Support Program:** CM. (P1 and P2)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + Offer Web-enabled survey tools and offer businesses an automated system for offering consumers packages and coupons from their listings. **Timeline:** April 2010. (P2)
- + Add “Trip Advisor” reviews for opt-in lodging facilities on visitmt.com. **Timeline:** September 2009. **Support Programs:** CM, PUB. (P1 and P2)
- + Integrate social media applications into our digital marketing strategy. **Timeline:** December 2009. **Support Programs:** CM, PUB. (P2)

- + Convert survey tool to an online application and add coupon and packaging component. **Timeline:** December 2010. **Support Program:** CM. (P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY D:

- + Develop an easily referenced archive for monthly KPIs. **Timeline:** October 2009. **Support Programs:** CM and PIO. (Supports P4)
- + Conduct regular, ongoing analysis and hold monthly KPI meetings with appropriate staff to evaluate promotions and guide future decisions. **Timeline:** Monthly beginning July 2009, with additional meetings to analyze major campaigns. **Support Programs:** CM and PIO. (Supports P1, P2 and P4)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

VISITMT.COM

- + Offer new opportunities for businesses to offer packages and coupons.

CALENDAR:

JULY-DECEMBER 2009

- + Integrated Interactive Strategy Review
- + Add "Trip Advisor" reviews
- + Enhance transportation section
- + KPI Archive

JANUARY-JUNE 2010

- + Integrate wintermt.com into visitmt.com
- + Integrate social media
- + Develop a mobile application to find lodging
- + Contest for kids

JULY-DECEMBER 2010

- + Convert survey tool to an online application
- + Implement preferred hosting platform
- + Develop a mobile application to view current ski conditions
- + Develop a mobile-enabled version of visitmt.com
- + Random rotating events
- + "Outdoor" kids contest
- + Featured "Outdoor" communities on montanakids.com

BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER: PUBLIC RELATIONS

OVERVIEW:

Public Relations is one of the most believable and effective types of exposure a travel destination can get. Coverage in key travel and news media markets can result in stories and programs that generate interest in Montana. The publicity/photography program works with various media outlets to facilitate this coverage and help spread the word about the latest and greatest reasons for visiting.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.1 – Implement highly targeted consumer advertising and promotion campaigns, based on strategic marketing plans, and track/report results
- + Action 1.2.d – Target travel media to increase visibility of Montana as a leisure travel destination
- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Public Relations is \$454,364, representing approximately 4% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Generate at least \$14.5 million in ad equivalency as measured by PR Trak.
- + Grow our media database, currently at 1,530, by 3%, approximately 50 new entries, using both proactive (researching and developing relationships with appropriate media) and reactive (responding to media requests, thereby establishing relationships) approaches.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Generate continuous positive editorial placement within all travel media outlets (domestic and international) through proactive and reactive media outreach, including newspapers, consumer publications, travel trade media, broadcast outlets and the Web. **Division Goals 1 and 2. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)**
- b. Strengthen and utilize the relationships with the state's six tourism Regions, CVBs and tourism industry suppliers/partners to support and maintain fresh, cost-effective public relations strategies. **Division Goals 1 and 3. (P1)**
- c. Continue to build a digital image library that supports the needs of the media and our regional/statewide partners that represents our branding platforms. **Division Goals 1 and 2. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)**

- d. Through the PR Trak software, continue to track media coverage that results in a timelier, and more complete, accurate assessment of the dollar value of Montana's travel and tourism editorial exposure. **Division Goal 3. (P4)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A, B AND/OR C:

- + Develop and present outreach programs for the Regions/CVBs and their members to educate the audience on the value and importance of editorial placement and solicit their support for media efforts. **Strategy:** b. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program:** PIO. (P1)
- + Continue to build the image library, utilizing the support of the Regions/CVBs, as well as businesses involved in providing tourism-related services. **Strategies:** a, b and c. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (P1, P3)
- + Grow the content of the newly revised pressroom, to provide creative, current subject matter to the media, as well as provide an outlet for those involved in state tourism to get the word out on new offerings (events, activities, lodging, etc.) for the visitor. **Strategies:** a, b and c. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Continue to develop creative and enticing direct email campaigns to appropriate markets. **Strategies:** a and b. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1, P2, and P3)
- + Utilize one or more social networking sites as a form of engagement and communication with media outlets. **Strategies:** a and b. **Timeline:** Ongoing (Supports P2)
- + Work with the Regions/CVBs to develop and implement group (minimum of one trip per Region per year) and individual media tours, with the goal being to generate positive editorial placement. **Strategies:** a and b. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + With the support of the contracted PR agency – MercuryCSC – conduct media missions or themed media events in key national markets (New York, Los Angeles, Denver/Boulder) to increase awareness of Montana's diverse travel product and to pitch targeted story placement. **Strategies:** a and b. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Participate in trade/travel shows and markets with a record of strong media attendance to develop new media connections, such as SATW and Outdoor Retailer Markets. **Strategy:** a. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Support photo workshops (through logistical support and itinerary development) as a means of reaching the visitor interested in this niche market. Currently supporting the AZ Photo Workshop. Continue to build the online photo gallery to visually enhance our website and to help showcase Montana's photography talents. **Strategy:** b. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Develop public relations strategies that integrate into consumer marketing/branding campaigns, to help support and generate greater results from Montana's advertising efforts. **Strategy:** a. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** CM, BRAND, WEB. (P1 and P2)
- + Work in tandem with the various trail programs and geotourism efforts (Crown of the Continent and Great Yellowstone MapGuide) to facilitate positive coverage for these newsworthy entities. **Strategies:** a, b and c. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** TD&E, PIO. (Supports P1 and P3)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY D:

- + Through PR Trak, monitor and report publicity values twice annually; distribute the PR exposure highlights at each of the TAC meetings. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (P4)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Partner not only with Regions/CVBs on hosted media visits, but also with individual businesses providing Montana products and guest services. Collaborate on itineraries and securing reduced or comped lodging, meals and guided activities for media visits. Further educate these businesses on the value positive press coverage adds to their business, as a result of partnering with state efforts.

CALENDAR:

JULY 2009

- + July 10-12: National Folk Festival, Butte
- + July 20-24: AZ Photo Workshop, Glacier National Park
- + Outdoor Retailer Summer Market in Salt Lake City

AUGUST 2009

- + Endless Feast production, Whitefish area (dates TBA)

SEPTEMBER 2009

- + Equitrekking episode filming in Custer/Yellowstone countries

OCTOBER 2009

- + October 8-12: SATW annual meeting, Guadalajara, Mexico

NOVEMBER 2009

- + Pheasants Forever media Conservation Forum and Destination Hunt, Fort Benton area

JANUARY 2010

- + TBD: Outdoor Retailer Winter Market in Salt Lake City

BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER: PUBLICATIONS

OVERVIEW:

Publications play an important role in the planning process of potential visitors. The guides provide accurate, colorful and easy-to-read information about Montana's year-round recreational opportunities and attractions to visitors of all ages. They are often a potential visitor's first glimpse at what Montana has to offer and play an important part in the vacation planning process of travelers. This program develops advertising programs for the promotions of Montana businesses and works closely with tourism partners to coordinate marketing efforts. Publication distribution is through chambers, visitor centers, consumer shows, conventions, local businesses and direct mail from inquiries driven by the advertising.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.1 – Implement highly targeted consumer advertising and promotion campaigns, based on strategic marketing plans, and track/report results
- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Publications is \$576,452, representing approximately 5% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Create an online, interactive survey that measures the success of the newly created online travel planning tools/journal and printed guide
- + Maintain the same number of inquiries for the Vacation Planner – either online, mobile or printed versions – as in FY09

STRATEGIES:

- a. Provide high-quality fulfillment pieces to consumer inquiries to convert interest into sale. **Division Goal 1. (P1)**
- b. Provide information in an easy-to-use format to encourage travel throughout all areas of the state and throughout all seasons. **Division Goal 1. (P1 and Supports P3)**
- c. Provide the Winter Guide and Vacation Planner online using live/dynamic data. **Division Goal 1. (P2 and Supports P3)**
- d. Provide a mobile version of the Vacation Planner to the consumer. **Division Goal 1. (P2)**

- e. Work closely with other Montana Office of Tourism marketing campaigns to coordinate branding efforts. **Division Goal 1. (P1)**
- f. Continue to offer Montana businesses no- or low-cost advertising opportunities to promote their tourism product and services. **Division Goals 2 and 3 (Supports P1 and P3)**
- g. Continue communication with all State and Federal agencies, publishing consistent messages on public lands, regulations and permits. **Division Goal 2. (P1)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A THROUGH G:

- + Continue to work closely with contracted ad agency, print vendors and freelance photographers to maintain high-quality printed and online materials. **Strategies:** a, b, c, d, e, f, g. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB, CM, PR. **(P1)**
- + Posted new Publications RFP in April 2009 to select a contracted agency that can bring our electronic guides to a more functional level using live data. Using live, dynamic data will present the most current information to the user for less stressful planning and gives a state-of-the-art presence. **Strategies:** a, b, c, d, e, f, g. **Timeline:** February 2010. **Support Program:** WEB. **(P2)**
- + Offer mobile versions of the Winter Guide and Vacation Planner for use with cell phones, PDAs, Kindles and other popular mobile devices. **Strategies:** a, b, d, e, f. **Timeline:** September 2010. **Support Programs:** WEB. **(P2)**
- + Coordinate the purchasing of photos through Montana Office of Tourism contracted vendors for multi-use in guides, consumer marketing campaigns and on the website. Continue coordination of printed materials with current marketing campaigns and website design/content. **Strategies:** a, b, e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB, CM, PR, Consumer Marketing and Publications Contractors. **(P1 and P2)**
- + Collect data of URL hits from intro pages in the Vacation Planner. (URLs on the intro pages in the Vacation Planner are designed to collect hits of interest specific to the Vacation Planner.) Use this data to study interest areas important to the guide. Conduct online survey to determine usability and functionality of current online guide. Set objectives for online guide changes by September 2009. **Strategies:** b. **Timeline:** September 2009. **Support Program:** WEB. **(P4)**

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Opportunities for affordable advertising to Montana businesses within some of the 1.6 million pieces of literature distributed each year are an excellent way for businesses to reach the travel market.

MONTANA VACATION PLANNER

The Montana Office of Tourism's main response piece, this statewide travel services data book offers free listings and space available for advertising at reasonable fees. Space reservation deadline is generally August 1. Updated yearly. Distributed through direct mail, consumer shows, chamber offices, visitor information centers and local businesses. About 400,000 printed each year.

MONTANA WINTER GUIDE

The Montana Office of Tourism's winter response piece provides comprehensive information on Montana's downhill ski areas, cross-country resorts and trail systems, snowmobile reference charts, snowcoach tours and winter accommodations. Advertorial placements require the purchase of the space. Space reservation deadline is generally the end of April. Updated yearly. Distributed through direct mail, consumer shows, chamber offices, visitor information centers and local businesses. About 85,000 printed each year.

CALENDAR:

EARLY AUGUST 2009

- + Winter Guide ready for distribution
- + Deadline for Vacation Planner ad space and surveys

EARLY SEPTEMBER 2009

- + Deadline for Vacation Planner advertising materials

EARLY JANUARY 2010

- + Vacation Planner ready for distribution

LATE APRIL 2010

- + Deadline for Winter Guide ad space and materials

BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER AND PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT: VISITOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS

OVERVIEW:

The Visitor Information Systems (VIS) Program is a component of an integrated and comprehensive tourism marketing strategy. Upon arriving in and traveling through Montana via highway, air, or rail, travelers need an integrated, strategic system of information from a variety of sources for a successful vacation experience. The VIS Program's goal is to work with Montana's state, federal, local and tribal partners to create a system of visitor information dissemination and promote the system through travel websites, visitor guides and partners.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts
- + Action 1.4 – Improve Montana's Visitor Information Systems to extend visitor stays and spending

GOAL 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 2.1 – Build awareness about new Montana Tourism Charter, geotourism and tourism benefits
- + Action 2.4 – Address ongoing and emerging tourism and recreation policy issues through collaborative efforts between policy-makers, agencies, businesses, nonprofit organizations, tribes, etc.

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

GOAL 8: Enhance the "curb appeal" of Montana communities to attract visitors

- + Action 8.1 – Increase the capacity of Montana communities to be more competitive in tourism
- + Action 8.2 – Implement improvements to make Montana communities more visitor-friendly

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Visitor Information Systems is \$379,398, representing approximately 3% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Increase visitation to the Montana Office of Tourism supported VICs by 2% over 2008 figures.
- + Create baseline data to measure usage of visitor information option on MDT's 511 system.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Implement the new Montana tourism brand to enhance the state's image and message in priority markets. **Division Goal 1. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- b. Expand public-private marketing partnerships with tourism businesses and attractions in publicity, web marketing, advertising, publications and other promotions. **Division Goals 1 and 2 and 3. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- c. Establish criteria for "officially-designated" visitor information sites and services and foster more collaboration between agency and private visitor services. **Division Goal 2 and 3. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- d. Sponsor training for staff and volunteer board members of tourism, recreation, historic and cultural organizations and agencies. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- e. Continue the Special Events Grant Program (SEGP) to improve tourism and recreation-related economic development through the advertising and promotion of ongoing festivals and events. **Division Goals 1 and 3. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- f. Develop event planning and management workshop based on attendees' recommendations; include section on brand implementation and tools for measuring an event's success. **Division Goals 1 and 3.**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Work with SEGP recipients to ensure festivals and events support the Montana brand. **Timeline:** Fall/Winter 2009-10. **(Supports P1 and P3)**
 - + 2009-10 SEGP application will require applicants to identify marketing and promotional strategies that incorporate the Montana brand.
- + Sponsor event management and planning workshops on an annual basis. *Also supports Strategy D and F.* **Timeline:** Fall 2009. **(Supports P1)**
 - + Fall 2009 – Bring a professional educator to the state to train event organizers.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Expand traveler information options on MDT's 511 system during 2009. **Timeline:** Summer 2009. **(Supports P1 and P4)**
 - o July 2009 – Proposed deadline to begin 511 call transfers to the Montana Office of Tourism's Call Center.
- + Integrate VIC Display Case Program with the Made-in-Montana program to create a cooperative marketing campaign to reach nonresident visitors. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1 and P3)**
 - o New system of MIM product distribution implemented Spring 2009.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + Revise VIC site selection criteria for state-supported visitor information centers. **Timeline:** Fall 2009. (Supports P1)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY E:

- + Revise SEGP guidelines to be more inline with business operational plans. **Timeline:** August 2009. (Supports P1 and P3)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + Event Planning and Management involves community and nonprofit organizational input at many levels. Will work with various stakeholder groups to encourage attendance at workshops to promote local economic development.
- + Partner with Made in Montana and its producers to feature Montana-made products at the Montana Office of Tourism-supported VICs. Work with tourism Regions and CVBs to promote buying MIM products.
- + Partner with MDT, tourism Regions and CVBs to promote visitor information option on 511 system.

CALENDAR:

JULY 2009

- + July 1: Begin 511 visitor information transfer to Call Center.

SEPTEMBER 2009

- + Hold Event Planning and Management Workshop. Location: TBD

OCTOBER 2009

- + Release SEGP application to the public

NOVEMBER 2009

- + November 30: VICs close for the season

DECEMBER 2009

- + Mid-December: SEGP grant deadline

APRIL 2010

- + April 1: Begin statewide distribution of Travel Planner through Certified Folder Displays
- + April 1: Begin distribution of Travel Planner at select MDT Rest Areas.

MAY 2010

- + May 1: VICs open for the season
- + May 1: Begin Made-in-Montana partnership at VICs

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS/NICHE: OVERSEAS MARKETING

OVERVIEW:

The Montana Office of Tourism aggressively promotes Montana as a vacation destination to the international travel trade – including tour operators, tour wholesalers (receptive tour operators), travel agents and media, with a particular focus on Germany, the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan, Taiwan, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Australia. The goal of this program is to increase the number of overseas visitors and overnights, as well as to increase the inclusion of the Montana tourism product in tour operators' brochures.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.1 – Implement highly targeted consumer advertising/promotion campaigns
 - + Action 1.1.d – Continue marketing to international travelers
- + Action 1.2 – Promote Montana to target groups/events, emphasizing off-peak activities
 - + Action 1.2.e – Continue to target tour operators to bring tours/package vacations to Montana

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote existing historic/cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

GOAL 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services

- + Action 5.2 – Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Overseas Marketing is \$600,760, representing approximately 5% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Increase overseas visitation to Montana from the reported 3% to 4% (ITRR sampling) to 5%.
- + Increase the number of Montana overnights offered ("product on the shelf") in the RMI TRIP report from 1% to 7%.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Increase the number of international visitors to Montana from current markets by further developing and fostering positive relationships with overseas tour operators and USA-based receptive tour operators. **Division Goal 2. (Supports P1)**
- b. Provide technical assistance to Montana partners on international marketing. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**
- c. Enhance, increase and maintain product knowledge of Montana facilities, attractions and events. **Division Goals 2 and 3. (Supports P1 and P3)**
- d. Research methods of tracking actual overnights of international visitors per year. **Division Goal 3. (P4)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Attend trade shows and conduct sales missions to meet with tour operators and media to promote Montana as a vacation destination and encourage the inclusion of more tourism product in tour company brochures; follow up with the latest information on Montana such as Vacation Planners, etc. **Timeline:** November 2009; January – December 2010. **Support Programs:** PUB (Supports P1)
- + Conduct a direct mail campaign for tour operators by sending an in-house quarterly newsletter that highlights new Montana product and offers suggested itineraries or new/unique attractions and destinations. **Timeline:** July 2009. **Support Programs:** GRP, PUB, PR, PIO. (Supports P1 and P3)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Include an international marketing session at annual Governor's Conference. **Timeline:** April 2010. **Support Program:** TD&E. (Supports P1)
- + Investigate cooperative opportunities with partners such as CVBs, Regions or Montana tourism suppliers to supplement the costs. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1)
- + Present information and updates on international marketing at TAC meetings and to Regions/CVBs as needed. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1)
- + In April 2010, prepare list of lodging facilities, attractions, etc., for site visits by fall of 2010; report findings back to tour operators, etc., for their consideration for inclusion in their Montana tour products. Also report to Montana Office of Tourism staff, Regions and CVBs as appropriate. **Also supports Strategy C. Timeline:** October 2009. (Supports P1)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A, B AND C:

- + Organize and conduct the RMI RoundUp in partnership with RMI, Montana Regions, CVBs and suppliers to showcase a TBA Montana destination and overall state tourism product. **Timeline:** May 2009 through RU conclusion on April 16, 2010. **Support Programs:** PUB, PR, PIO. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Educate tour operators from Montana's target market on Montana tourism product by conducting familiarization tours as needed or on an as-requested basis. **Timeline:** July 2009 through December 2010/Ongoing. (Supports P1 and P3)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY D:

- + Distribute the trade show leads to Montana suppliers for follow-up, and have all leads available on the intranet site. **Goals:** c and e. **Timeline:** November 2009; January – December 2010. **Support Programs:** WEB and PUB. (Supports P1 and P2)
- + Track results via RMI Annual Marketing and TRIP report and via information/ samplings through ITRR if funding is available. **Timeline:** November 2010. (Supports P4)
- + Develop a measurement tool to calculate the actual number of overnights booked in Montana per overseas market. **Timeline:** December 2010. (Supports P4)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + Work with the CVBs, Regions and private sector to conduct international marketing training sessions (goal is three sessions for FY10) throughout the year.
- + Partner with Montana tourism suppliers on the promotion of their product through attendance at trade shows.
- + Partner with Montana tourism suppliers on the promotion of their product through participation in FAM tours.

CALENDAR:

2009/2010 DATES TBA: TRADE AND/OR PRESS MISSION IN THE UK AND GERMANY, IN COOPERATION WITH RMI.

AUGUST 2009

- + August 30 – September 1: ESTO in Reno, NV

SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER 2009

- + Dates TBA: Sales calls and seminars in Asia Pacific markets to include Japan, Taiwan and possibly a city in China

NOVEMBER 2009

- + November 9-12: RMI attends WTM in London on behalf of Montana
- + November 10-15: Visit USA Italy Showcase, Rome, Italy in cooperation with RMI

JANUARY 2010

- + January 27-February 3: Scandinavian Mission including Sweden and Denmark, in cooperation with RMI
- + Dates TBA: NAJ Tour Operator Summit in Los Angeles, CA

FEBRUARY 2010

- + February 1-4: Go West Summit in Sacramento, CA
- + February 13-19: Australian Mission in cooperation with RMI

MARCH 2010

- + March 10-14: RMI attends ITB trade show in Berlin, Germany on behalf of Montana
- + March 16-20: Sales calls and trainings in Paris, France in cooperation with RMI

APRIL 2010

- + April 8-9: Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism

- + April 12-13: RMI Summit Meeting
- + April 13-16: RMI RoundUp in Montana, location TBA

MAY 2010

- + May 15-19: Attend TIA's International Pow Wow in Orlando, FL
- + TBA: Active America Travel Summit in Minnesota (Kumamoto office attends for Montana Office of Tourism)

JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2010

- + TBA: Site visits to Montana tourism product

AUGUST 2010

- + TBA: ESTO, location TBA

SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER 2010

- + TBA: Sales calls and seminars in Asia Pacific markets to include Japan, Taiwan and possibly a city in China

NOVEMBER 2010

- + TBA: World Travel Market trade show in London
- + TBA: Visit USA Showcase in Italy, location TBA

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS/NICHE: GROUP TRAVEL MARKETING

OVERVIEW:

The Group Travel Marketing program is responsible for promoting Montana as a vacation destination to tour operators, travel agents and travel journalists in the U.S. and Canada.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.2 – Promote Montana to target groups/events, emphasizing off-peak activities
- + Action 1.2.e – Continue to target tour operators to bring tours/package vacations to Montana
- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote existing historic/cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

GOAL 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services

- + Action 5.2 – Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Group Travel Marketing is \$144,537, representing approximately 1% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Increase visits and inquiries to www.montanagroups.com by 5% over 2007 and 2008.
- + Measure data by establishing an evaluation method for advertising/promotion efforts.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Build and maintain a positive image with prospective group tour planners through ongoing outreach. **Division Goals 2 and 3. (Supports P1)**
- b. Create top-of-mind awareness of Montana as a group tour destination through ongoing outreach. **Division Goals 2 and 3. (Supports P1, P2)**
- c. Convert inquiries into group tour bookings. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**
- d. Provide tour operators with the tools to build a successful Montana tour itinerary. **Division Goals 2 and 3. (Supports P1, P2, P3)**

- e. Generate more awareness of statewide group tour product including Lewis and Clark Trail attractions, Glacier National Park and events of interest to the group tour market. **Division Goals 2 and 3. (Supports P1, P2)**
- f. Establish research to track group visitation and its economic impact on Montana. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P4)**
- g. Create an integrated digital strategy, with short- and long-term goals with Electronic Marketing. **Division Goals 1, 2 and 3. (P2)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A THROUGH E:

- + Advertising placement in key trade publications. **Strategies:** a, b and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Attending industry events, National Tour Association Convention (NTA), American Bus Association Convention (ABA) and Tour Associated Partners (TAP) annual meeting. **Strategies:** a, b, c, d and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1 and P3)**
- + Sponsor refreshment booth at the NTA Convention to gain Montana exposure and enhance awareness. **Strategies:** a, b, c, d and e. **Timeline:** November 2009 and 2010. **(Supports P1, P3)**
- + Provide Group Tour Planning manual and continually update www.montanagroups.com. **Strategies:** a, d and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P2)**
- + Conduct Familiarization tour opportunities to Montana to increase awareness of tour itinerary opportunities. **Strategies:** a, b, d, and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Distribute quarterly electronic newsletters that highlight new Montana product as well as offer suggested itineraries or new/unique attractions and destinations. **Strategies:** a, b, d and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB and INTL. **(Supports P2)**
- + Provide yearly the Montana Calendar to key Tour Operators. **Strategies:** a, c and e. **Timeline:** December 2009 and 2010. **(Supports P1)**
- + Assist media in writing about the group travel opportunities in Montana. **Strategies:** a, b, d and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program:** PR. **(Supports P1, P2 P3)**
- + Explore additional opportunities for joint venture advertising and co-op projects with Regions, CVBs and Montana tourism suppliers. **Strategies:** d and e. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1, P3)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY F:

- + Using data from www.montanagroups.com and other sources measure economic impact of Group Travel to Montana. **Timeline:** Ongoing; **Support Programs:** Electronic Marketing. **(Supports P2, P3)**

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + Familiarization tour opportunities with Regions/CVBs and Montana's industry partners.
- + The opportunity to sponsor and participate in the refreshment booth during NTA Convention.
- + Co-op advertising in trade publications such as Courier, Destination, Group Tour, and Leisure Group Travel.

CALENDAR:

SUMMER 2009

- + August: Tour Operator Winner of the NTA Trip Giveaway

NOVEMBER 2009

- + November 14-18: NTA, Reno, NV

JANUARY 2010

- + January 15-19: ABA, Washington, DC

FEBRUARY 2010

- + February 7-9: BankTravel, Milwaukee, WI

JUNE 2010

- + TBD: Travel Alliance Partners, Branson, MO

SUMMER 2010

- + TBD: Tour Operator Winner of the NTA Trip Giveaway

NOVEMBER 2010

- + November 13-17: Montreal, Quebec

ONGOING

- + TBD: Media buy for trade publications such as Courier, Destination, Group Tour, and Leisure Group Travel.

PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT: BRANDING INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW:

The Branding Initiative program is responsible for implementing and promoting a consistent positive brand image for Montana as a vacation destination. The program works to not only ensure consistency with the brand platform and principles, but also to develop and administer brand outreach and services to encourage cooperation and support of the Montana Office of Tourism brand strategy.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 2.1 – Build awareness about new Montana Tourism Charter, geotourism and tourism benefits

GOAL 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services

- + Action 5.2 – Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses

GOAL 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 9.2 – Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars
- + Action 9.3 – Enhance funding for Region and CVB marketing efforts

GOAL 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results

- + Action 10.2 – Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project implementation

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for the Branding Initiative is \$193,555, representing approximately 2% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Make nine roadshow presentations to a total of 500+ people by August 1, 2009.
- + Hold 40 Montana brand presentations (in addition to the roadshows), reaching 1,000+ people by December 31, 2010.
- + Execute a brand awareness measurement study by July 2010.
- + Enlist 50 brand/tourism ambassadors in new ambassador program by July 1, 2010.
- + Achieve brand adaptation among 60% of the partners (Regions/CVBs) by July 1, 2010.
- + Achieve 20 partnerships in the public or private tourism or business industries by December 31, 2010.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Develop a comprehensive strategic plan to guide and promote statewide branding initiative development and measurable success. **Division Goal: 1.** (P1)
- b. Increase the awareness and implementation of the branding initiative to ensure and encourage marketing consistency across various private and public platforms through the comprehensive strategic branding initiative plan (as noted above).
Division Goals: 1 and 3. (P1)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A AND B:

- + Organize and conduct statewide brand roadshows to educate our tourism partners on how to use and leverage the brand. Providing valuable, immediately actionable takeaways to numerous tourism industry folks with varying levels of marketing expertise. **Timeline:** July 2009. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Develop a brand tool kit to aid partners in using and implementing the brand, with technical assistance online resources and content to help educate staff and industry on Montana's target audience, the brand platform and how to consistently apply the brand in various industry settings and promotional efforts. Including online brand consistency and integrating brand voice into social efforts. **Timeline:** July 2009. **Support Programs:** All. (Supports P1, P2, P3)
- + Develop an ambassador program that will help to promote and support the brand and also create champions for our statewide tourism efforts by educating all Montanans about the importance of tourism. **Timeline:** August 2009 – September 2009. **Support Programs:** All. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Develop a co-operative incentive/matching fund program to encourage adaptation of the brand and to facilitate Montana's public-private tourism and industry partnership development. **Timeline:** August 2009 – September 2009. **Support Programs:** All. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Develop a third brand guidebook that will outline incentives and co-operative partnerships. **Timeline:** October 2009 – November 2009. **Support Programs:** All. (Supports P1)
- + Continue outreach and development of partnerships that allow the Montana Office of Tourism and public-private entities to leverage resources, and align missions to best be able to connect with receptive audiences. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P1)
- + Outreach and development of partnerships with tribal communities, off-the-beaten path areas, niche and arts and culture markets. **Timeline:** Ongoing. (Supports P3)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + See Actions noted above for details.

CALENDAR:

JULY 2009

- + Brand Roadshows
- + Brand Tool Kit Development

AUGUST 2009

- + Ambassador Program Development
- + Brand Co-Op Incentive Program

OCTOBER 2009

- + Guidebook III

JULY 2009 – DECEMBER 2010

- + Ongoing brand awareness presentations and efforts to unify the Montana Office of Tourism and statewide tourism industry under the brand platform and target audience

PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

OVERVIEW:

The Tourism Development and Education program provides financial, technical and marketing assistance for Montana tourism and recreation projects, programs, initiatives, products and services. The program's activities include financial grants for nonprofit sponsors involved in developing or enhancing tourism-related facilities and Montana's cultural, heritage and nature tourism products. Technical assistance is provided to both public and private sector entities through education services, including community, regional and statewide workshops, an annual Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation, a recurring statewide strategic planning process and the Montana Superhost customer service training program.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts

GOAL 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 2.1 – Build awareness about new Montana Tourism Charter, geotourism and tourism benefits

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors
- + Action 4.2 – Improve and maintain infrastructure, facilities and services to support heritage and cultural tourism in Montana

GOAL 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services

- + Action 5.2 – Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses

GOAL 6: Address tourism and recreation professional development, workforce availability, training and affordable housing issues

- + Action 6. 1 – Enhance professional development opportunities/requirements for tourism organizations

GOAL 8: Enhance the "curb appeal" of Montana communities to attract visitors

- + Action 8.1 – Increase the capacity of Montana communities to be more competitive in tourism

GOAL 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 9.2 – Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars
- + Action 9.3 – Enhance funding for Region and CVB marketing efforts

GOAL 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results

- + Action 10.2 – Create public/private/tribal partnerships for cooperative project implementation
- + Action 10.3 – Implement Strategic Plan discussion/reporting to align activities with goals and actions

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Tourism Development and Education is \$690,706, representing approximately 6% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Leverage more than \$1.5 million in public and/or private sector funds in the projects awarded for each of the 2009 and 2010 TIIP Grants.
- + Complete a survey of all TIIP grant recipients in 2009 and develop method to continue survey on an annual basis.
- + 75% of Montana Strategic Plan Stakeholders use online reporting system to keep their activities updated.
- + Montana Strategic Plan online reporting system used to provide an updated mid-plan status report for TAC, Governor’s Office and Elected Officials in 2010.
- + Montana Superhost training services reach 1000 participants annually.
- + Provide technical and financial assistance for one to three cultural and heritage tourism projects.
- + Implement one to two statewide and/or regional workshops on tourism-related topics.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Use Montana’s tourism “bed tax” to leverage public and private sector investments into the creation, enhancement and protection of tourism-related facilities that demonstrate the ability to move Montana into the consideration set by increasing Montana’s attraction as a visitor destination and/or keep current visitors in Montana longer and encourage them to spend more money, providing more revenue for Montana tourism entities. Place special focus on preserving, enhancing and protecting Montana’s unique cultural and heritage resources for the use and enjoyment of Montanans and our visitors. **Division Goals 2 and 3.** (Supports P1 and P3)
- b. Assist communities, Regions, nonprofit organizations and other public entities in the development of Montana’s unique cultural, heritage and nature tourism products, services and networks – including digital and tourism promotion networks – that will move them into the consideration set. Assistance includes technical and financial support as well as facilitation and education services. **Division Goals 2 and 3.** (Supports P1 and P3 in part)
- c. Provide Montanans information and training opportunities regarding tourism as an economic and community development tool, target markets and the Montana Brand strategy, low- and no-cost marketing services, success tracking and measurement tools, and other pertinent topics. The information and training opportunities will be offered through workshops, seminars, assessments, strategic planning, digital communications (webinars) and networking. **Division Goals 1, 2 and 3.** (Supports P1, P2, P3 and P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Award Tourism Infrastructure Investment Program (TIIP) Grants to projects that create, enhance or protect tourism-related facilities that increase Montana's attraction as a visitor destination, keep visitors here longer and help them to spend more money. *Also supports Strategy B.* **Timeline:** October 2009 and October 2010. **Support Programs:** WEB and PIO. (Supports P1)
- + Survey TIIP Grant Recipients 1995-2008 regarding visitation, visitor spending, benefits from TIIP grant project. *Also supports Strategy C.* **Timeline:** September-November 2009. **Support Program:** OP. (Supports P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Help finance the production of at least 100,000 copies of the Montana Cultural Treasures booklet and pay for its statewide distribution. **Timeline:** March 2010 for production, Ongoing for statewide distribution through Certified Folder Display Services. **Support Program:** IS. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Help promote, distribute and further develop the Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Project products (currently MapGuide and Website) with project partners including National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations and the Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Council. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Help promote, distribute and further develop the Crown of the Continent Geotourism Project products (currently MapGuide and Website) with project partners that include National Geographic's Center for Sustainable Destinations. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES B AND C:

- + Explore opportunities and interest among Montana and National Geographic partners for developing a Geotourism Project in Central and Eastern Montana. **Timeline:** Fall 2009-Spring 2010 **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Provide technical and financial assistance for one to three new or ongoing cultural and heritage tourism projects including: (Supports P1, P2)
 - + Update, reprint and distribute the Montana Dinosaur Trail brochure and website, and assist with trail promotion and development. **Timeline:** Summer 2009-2010. **Support Programs:** ALL.
 - + Participate in discussions and any subsequent planning or development for the new MT-WY Horseshoe Cultural Tourism Loop. **Timeline:** Begin Summer 2009. **Support Programs:** ALL.
 - + Provide financial and technical support for the Friends of the Beartooth All American Road organization. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL.
- + Work with tourism partners to identify existing or new unique cultural and heritage tourism projects to assist with development and promotion. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Work with the Montana Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, the Montana Commerce Department's Indian Country Economic Development Programs, STED Commission and other appropriate programs to identify ways the TD&E Program can coordinate its tourism development and education efforts in Montana's Indian Country with their efforts for more effective use of resources. **Timeline:** Summer-Fall 2009. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P3)
- + Use the online Strategic Plan reporting system as a tool for communicating with Plan Stakeholders, developing outreach tools to increase education, buy-in and action on the plan's goals, objectives and actions and reporting to stakeholders and decision makers. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB and PIO. (P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + Work with Office of Tourism Program Managers and/or Region and CVB partners to plan, organize and implement one to two statewide and/or regional workshops on tourism-related topics. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** CM and PIO. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Plan, organize and implement the 2010 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation. **Timeline:** April 8-9, 2010. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)
- + Work with Montana Superhost Contractor to develop, promote and provide the new menu and delivery systems for customer service training services based on the research and report provided by Montana Superhost in Spring 2009. **Timeline:** Summer-Fall 2009. **Support Programs:** PIO, WEB and IS. (Supports P1, P2 and P3)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

TIIP GRANT PROGRAM

- + Public and private sector funding partners to assist in financing TIIP grant projects.
- + Promotion and publicity efforts to highlight TIIP-funded facilities, their improvements, products and services.

CULTURE/HERITAGE PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

- + Public and private sector partners to provide financial and technical assistance for the development, promotion and distribution of Montana's cultural and heritage tourism products and services.
- + Promotion of the existing cultural and heritage tourism products in the state through the media – Montana, regional, national and international – as well as the Montana Office of Tourism's publications, consumer marketing and electronic marketing services.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

- + Participation in and promotion of the Montana Office of Tourism's education workshops, conferences, Montana Superhost Sessions and Strategic Plan implementation efforts.
- + Assistance in putting into action a Strategic Plan implementation and monitoring process.
- + Identify topics for regional and statewide workshops and Governor's Conference presentations.

CALENDAR:

AUGUST 3, 2009 AND AUGUST 2, 2010

- + TIIP Grant Application Deadline

OCTOBER 2009 AND 2010

- + Tourism Advisory Council Sends TIIP Grant
- + Award Recommendations to Montana Commerce Director for final approval

APRIL 8-9, 2010, MARCH 28-29, 2011

- + Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation, Kalispell 2010, Helena 2011, <http://travelmontana.mt.gov/conference/>

PRODUCT/BRAND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS: PUBLIC INFORMATION

OVERVIEW:

This program provides outreach and public information programs to communicate and share the Montana Office of Tourism's and the Montana tourism industry's initiatives and activities in order to educate and encourage community cooperation, support and understanding of the industry.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.3 – Collaborate with tourism marketing partners to plan/implement priority marketing efforts
- + Action 1.3.c – Conduct educational tourism workshops, presentations and webinars

GOAL 2: Attain public policy and citizen support for sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 2.1 – Build awareness about new Montana Tourism Charter, geotourism and tourism benefits
- + Action 2.2 – Give effective presentations to policy makers about Montana tourism issues/benefits

GOAL 4: Enhance and preserve Montana's culture and history

- + Action 4.1 – Promote Montana's existing historic and cultural assets for the enjoyment of residents and visitors

GOAL 10: Build an effective "team" to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results

- + Action 10.5 – Obtain strategic research to inform tourism marketing, development and policy decisions

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Public Information is \$103,800, representing approximately 1% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + A Montana Office of Tourism staff person to be in attendance at a total of 17 Region/CVB board and/or committee meetings - one for each of the 6 Regions and 11 CVBs.
- + Give the *Tourism Speaks* presentation to at least one civic group in each Region for a minimum total of six presentations.
- + Increase the read rate on e-Newsletter measured through eROI tracking from current 12-month average of 28% to 33%.
- + Begin measuring monthly visitor traffic to new industry news site, once fully developed and functional, to establish baseline traffic to measure against in the future.
- + As they are implemented, begin measuring number of fans, followers, subscribers, etc. to Montana's various social media initiatives to establish baseline usage to measure against in the future.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Expand tourism education and outreach into Montana's communities and expand the Montana Office of Tourism staff outreach and visibility with our tourism partners throughout the state through programs and resources that provide education about Montana's tourism industry. **Division Goal 3.** (Supports P1 and P3)
- b. Develop a more engaging and efficient method of communicating with Montana's tourism industry. **Division Goal 3.** (Supports P1 and P3)
- c. Assist in developing and monitoring an online social media presence for Montana. **Division Goal 1 and 2.** (P2 and P4)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Coordinate the attendance of a Montana Office of Tourism representative at one board and/or committee meeting of each of the six Regions and eleven CVBs in order to foster better communication between the state and our tourism partners and build awareness of the assistance available through the Office of Tourism's marketing and technical resources. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Develop, update and revise as needed presentations, such as *Tourism Speaks* and *Tourism 101*, so that they can be used by the Montana Office of Tourism as well as other partners in Montana's tourism industry to increase support, understanding and local cooperation for Montana's tourism industry and build public awareness of the Montana Office of Tourism programs. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program:** WEB. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Work with tourism partners to identify committees, councils and interested organizations within their communities that would benefit from the *Tourism Speaks* presentation. Have *Tourism Speaks* presented to at least one civic organization per Region per year. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program:** ADMIN. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Work with staff to develop and coordinate several workshops around the state to assist tourism partners in their marketing. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1 and P3)
- + Work with the Montana Office of Tourism staff to maintain and update the Office of Tourism's Intranet website content. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1 and P2)
- + Oversee the development, editing, and publication of the Office of Tourism monthly e-newsletters, speaking points, Tourism Fast Fact Sheets and other related outreach materials. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P1 and P2)
- + Establish and maintain effective working relationships with media contacts to promote and cultivate media coverage of Montana and its tourism opportunities through press releases, interviews, etc. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ADMIN and PR. (Supports P1)
- + Oversee crisis communication activities on behalf of the Office of Tourism and when applicable, assist partners with crisis communication. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB and PR. (Supports P1)
- + Assist in the coordination and monitoring of the Montana Office of Tourism Marketing Plan in partnership with our advertising agency. **Timeline:** Ongoing; Summer/Fall 2010. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P4)
- + Attend industry conferences to keep abreast of tourism trends, initiatives and research. **Timeline:** August and October 2009; June 2010. (Supports P1)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Work with contractor eROI to develop a Montana tourism industry news site. *Also supports Strategy A.* **Timeline:** Spring/summer 2009. **Support Program:** WEB.

- + Once news site is developed, provide ongoing content to share, educate and communicate in a more immediate manner to interested parties. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** ALL. (Supports P2)

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + In conjunction with marketing and IT staff, develop a social media presence for Montana.
 - + Identify sites and social media practices that Montana should undertake to have more of a participatory presence and interaction in online social media.
 - + Work with Department of Commerce IT and ITSD to obtain permission and access to various social media sites/networks.
 - + Assist in developing a social media strategic plan for the division.
 - + Assist in monitoring and contributing content to various social media initiatives.
 - + **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB, CM and PR. (P2 and P4)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

- + Work with Regions, CVBs and other industry partners to identify organizations that would benefit from public outreach sessions regarding tourism's impacts, benefits and opportunities.
- + Provide outreach materials to industry partners such as tourism statistics, fact sheets, presentations, etc.

CALENDAR:

AUGUST 2009

- + August 30 – September 1: ESTO, Reno, NV

OCTOBER 2009

- + October 26-28: TIA Marketing Outlook, Little Rock, AR

MAY/JUNE 2010

- + PRSA Tourism Conference, TBD

AUGUST 2010

- + ESTO, TBD

OCTOBER 2010

- + Marketing Outlook Forum, TBD

ONGOING

- + Produce monthly the Montana Office of Tourism Update e-newsletter

OPERATIONS: OPERATIONS AND INDUSTRY SERVICES

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT:

GOAL 1: Increase four-season tourism revenues statewide through effective marketing and promotions, focusing on high-value, low-impact visitors

- + Action 1.4 – Improve Montana’s Visitor Information Systems to extend visitor stays and spending

GOAL 5: Support appropriate tourism business growth, including new tourism products and services

- + Action 5.2 – Provide information about technical/financial assistance available to tourism businesses

GOAL 6: Address tourism and recreation professional development, workforce availability, training and affordable housing issues

- + Action 6. 1 – Enhance professional development opportunities/requirements for tourism organizations

GOAL 9: Increase funding to maintain sustainable tourism and recreation

- + Action 9.2 – Foster opportunities to pool public and private marketing dollars
- + Action 9.3 – Enhance funding for Region and CVB marketing efforts

GOAL 10: Build an effective “team” to implement the Strategic Plan, and report results

- + Action 10.1 – Recognize the Montana Office of Tourism as a ‘team captain’ to communicate/coordinate regularly with partners
- + Action 10.3 – Implement Strategic Plan discussion/reporting to align activities with goals and actions
- + Action 10.4 – Streamline reporting process of marketing plans/expenditures to TAC/Montana Office of Tourism by Regions and CVBs

FY10 BUDGET:

The FY10 budget for Operations and Industry Services is divided into three budgets: the Operations budget of \$627,500, representing approximately 5.5% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget; the Contact Center budget of \$620,110, representing approximately 5% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget; and the Industry Services budget of \$321,041, representing approximately 3% of the total Montana Office of Tourism budget.

OPERATIONS: FULFILLMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

OVERVIEW:

This program serves as the administrative and fulfillment center for the Montana Office of Tourism and the Montana Film Office. Operations works closely with the Montana Office of Tourism staff to provide vital information and administrative support to enhance the overall mission of tourism development and multi-dimensional marketing of the state as a year-round travel destination. The Fulfillment Program utilizes the Contact Center and the Montana Office of Tourism's front desk as key points of customer contact, by providing potential tourism customers with prompt, accurate and current information.

FULFILLMENT

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Fulfill the "Invite A Friend" request within 72 hours of receipt. Customers are to receive information within 10 days.
- + Bulk product shipment customers are to receive orders within 10 days.
- + Process individual requests daily.

STRATEGIES:

- a. The program will continue to promote increased visitation by providing outstanding customer service and interactive relationships with the inquiring public by promptly answering all requests for information by phone and mail. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**
- b. Increase availability of the Montana Office of Tourism's Publications to Visitor Information Centers and Convention and Visitor Bureaus and Area Chambers of Commerce. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Improve fulfillment timeline. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Continue to fulfill the "Invite a Friends" request within 72 hours of receipt of request. Consumers receive information within 10 days. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Answer all inquiries promptly and enter customer information into VISITS software system. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Keep current with the ever-changing USPS mail rates and specifications. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Continually seek the best rates for shipping large shipments (pallets) of information. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Work with Visitor Information Systems program to continue expanding and enhancing the distribution of Travel Planners through a private contractor. Focus to be placed on high-traffic corridors of Montana. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program: VIS. (Supports P1)**
- + Continue sending out Bulk information promotional materials in a timely manner to stakeholders. *Also supports Strategy A.* **Timeline:** Ongoing. **(Supports P1)**
- + Measure our effectiveness and timeline of requested Montana Promotional publications, we send out. **Timeline:** Dec 2010. **(Supports P4)**
 - + Determine the source of their inquiry.
 - + Determine level of customer satisfaction.

OPERATIONS AND BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER: CONTACT CENTER

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + For every phone call document the date, ask the inquirers where they found the phone number and track their interests.
- + Respond to all requests for information within 72 hours.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Provide professional travel counseling and customer service with coverage 7:00 am-6:00 pm M-F. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**
- b. Respond to consumer inquiries with Montana information and maintain a database of inquiries by date, source code and interests. **Division Goal 3. (Supports P1)**
- c. Integrate the new logo into the Contact Center program. **Division Goal 1. (Supports P1)**
- d. Review the integrated digital strategy and see if changes need to be made to the Contact Center services. **Division Goal 2. (Supports P2)**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A AND B:

- + Begin to upgrade the VISITS computer program to Siebel 8.0. **Timeline:** January 2010. **Support Programs:** WEB and CM.
- + Streamline the VISITS computer program by requesting changes that would save time in processing requests and provide better service for the visitors. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB and CM.
- + Provide feedback from potential visitors about difficulties in finding information in the Montana Office of Tourism publications or websites. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Programs:** WEB and PUB.
- + Work with the Montana Department of Transportation to integrate a tourism component of the 511 system into the Contact Center via a direct phone transfer. **Timeline:** July 2009. **Support Programs:** WEB and VIS.
- + Provide a FAM trip for the Contact Center agents to two tourism Regions. **Timeline:** May and October 2010.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY C:

- + Provide the Contact Center with new letterhead and envelopes to respond to individual requests. **Timeline:** October 2009 **Support Programs:** Brand and PUB.
- + Change the VISITS reports and templates to reflect the new logo and letterhead. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the database letterhead. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the individual response letterhead. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Winter and Spring Bi-annual Shipment reports to include the new letterhead. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Contact Inquiry Summary Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Inquiry by Method Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.

- + Change the Inquiry Summary Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Fulfillment Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Inventory Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.
- + Change the Year to Date and Monthly Marketing Inquiry Comparison Report to include the new logo. **Timeline:** November 2009. **Support Programs:** Brand and WEB.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY D:

- + Incorporate the integrated digital strategy into the Contact Center RFP. **Timeline:** May 2010. **Support Programs:** WEB and Consumer Advertising.

OPERATIONS: INDUSTRY SERVICES

OVERVIEW:

Industry Services provides a staff liaison to the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC), Regions/Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) and other state agencies to assist with oversight and to assure compliance. By providing the staff liaison, this program provides essential support to Montana's nonprofit tourism organizations and oversees the distribution of the Lodging Facility Use Tax to the six Tourism Regions and eleven CVBs. In addition, the program monitors the Regions and CVBs for compliance and adherence to the current Regulations. It also works with the Department of Revenue to provide Lodging Facility Use Tax collection amounts to public and private sectors.

MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES FOR JULY 2009 – DEC. 2010:

- + Have all fiscal audits completed prior to the end of the calendar year.
- + Post revenue reports within 90 days of the end of each quarter to the Intranet site.
- + Post Region/CVBs marketing plans by September of each fiscal year to the Intranet site.
- + Post Region/CVB project applications to the intranet within 20 days of receiving final approval from the Audits/Applications Committee.
- + Continue to work as a liaison and assist TAC members, Committee Chairs and Task Force Chairs as needed in an ongoing, timely manner.

STRATEGIES:

- a. Serve as principal liaison between TAC, statewide tourism organizations, the Montana Office of Tourism, and private sector representatives to coordinate projects; apprise cooperators of program changes, initiatives, and requirements; and facilitate exchange of ideas and information. **Division Goal 3.**
- b. Provide information on program operations, activities, and changes; interpret and explain State regulations; and answer questions from Region/CVB representatives. **Division Goal 3.**
- c. Conduct annual financial and program audits of Region/CVB tourism organizations receiving Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue. **Division Goal 3.**

- d. Distribute quarterly Lodging Facility Use Tax payments to tourism organizations according to approved project plans and ensure that necessary funding is available for timely disbursement. **Division Goal 3.**
- e. Enhance and foster relationship with Department of Revenue to assure continued open lines of communication and sharing of information between Revenue, the Montana Office of Tourism, TAC and Regions/CVBs. **Division Goal 3.**
- f. Report status of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan actions and measurable objectives for the Industry Program/Compliance Specialist and the TAC. **Division Goal 3.**

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY A:

- + Work with the TAC Chair and Vice-Chair to develop and establish agendas, select and compile informational materials, and coordinate other details required for successful TAC meetings. **Timeline:** September 2009, January 2010, May 2010, September 2010.
Support Programs: ALL.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A AND B:

- + Verify accuracy and compliance of the 6 Tourism Regions and 11 CVBs annual marketing plans and project applications before submitting to the TAC for final approval. **Timeline:** May 2010.
- + Distribute project applications submitted after June TAC meeting to the Audits/Applications Committee for final approval. **Timeline:** Ongoing.
- + Continue sharing Region and CVB annual marketing plans and approved project applications via the Intranet. **Timeline:** Ongoing. **Support Program:** WEB.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGY B:

- + Administer fiscal contracts for tourism organizations to ensure the effective distribution of funds according to decisions and guidelines of TAC. **Timeline:** June 2010.
- + Work with Region/CVB co-chairs to plan, and coordinate biannual Region/CVB meetings. **Timeline:** November 2009, March 2010, November 2010.
- + Provide training and assistance for Region/CVB directors and their staff as needed. **Timeline:** Ongoing.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES B, C AND D:

- + Review quarterly financial and program compliance reports returned by the 17 certified tourism organizations. **Timeline:** July 2009, October 2009, January 2010, April 2010, July 2010, October 2010.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A, C AND D:

- + Present audit results to TAC with recommendations for follow-up or appropriate disciplinary actions. Ensure effective implementation of all post audit actions required by TAC. **Timeline:** October 2009, February 2010, October 2010.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES A, D AND E:

- + Track Lodging Facility Use Tax receipts throughout the year to ensure availability of revenue for approved programs, and apprise TAC of revenue status. **Timeline:** Ongoing.
- + Review revenue reports, calculate and verify adjustments, identify and resolve errors and discrepancies, and present findings to the Montana Office of Tourism Administrator and TAC. **Timeline:** Ongoing.
- + Provide Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to public and private sector via the Montana Office of Tourism Intranet website. To be updated on a quarterly basis. **Timeline:** September 2009, December 2009, March 2010, June 2010, September 2010.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES E:

- + Compile and distribute monthly revenue collection trends as reported by the Department of Revenue at each TAC meeting. **Timeline:** October 2009, February 2010, June 2010, October 2010.

ACTIONS FOR STRATEGIES F:

- + Report progress of the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan for the Industry Program/Compliance Specialist and the TAC on quarterly basis. **Timeline:** August 2009, November 2009, February 2010, May 2010, August 2010, November 2010

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

N/A

CALENDAR:

JULY 2009

- + 4th Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs

AUGUST 2009

- + 1st Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs
- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs

SEPTEMBER 2009

- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs
- + TAC Meeting Preparation
- + Post FY09 Region/CVB Marketing Plans to Intranet

OCTOBER 2009

- + October 5 – 7: TAC Meeting – Review audits
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet
- + 1st Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs
- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs

NOVEMBER 2009

- + Region/CVB meeting (two ½ days)
- + 2nd Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs

- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs
- + Updated FY10 Revenue Projections to Regions/CVBs
- + Previous fiscal year Rollover dollar amounts to Regions/CVBs

DECEMBER 2009

- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet

JANUARY 2010

- + January 1: FY08 Completion Reports due from Regions/CVBs
- + 2nd Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs
- + TAC Meeting preparation

FEBRUARY 2010

- + February 1 – 3: TAC Meeting– review audits
- + 3rd Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs

MARCH 2010

- + Region/CVB meeting (one full day)
- + FY11 Projected revenue figures to Regions/CVBs
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet

APRIL 2010

- + 3rd Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs

MAY 2010

- + 1: Region/CVB Annual Marketing Plans due
- + Review 17 Region/CVB Marketing Plans for accuracy and compliance
- + TAC Meeting Preparation

JUNE 2010

- + June 7 – 9: TAC Meeting – review and approve marketing plans
- + 4th Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs
- + FY11 Annual Contracts to Regions/CVBs
- + FY11 Marketing Plan approval letters to Regions/CVBs
- + Prepare FY11 Region/CVB Budget/Compliance Worksheets
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet

JULY 2010

- + 4th Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs

AUGUST 2010

- + 1st Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs
- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs

SEPTEMBER 2010

- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs
- + TAC Meeting Preparation
- + Post FY11 Region/CVB Marketing Plans to Intranet

OCTOBER 2010

- + October 4 – 6: TAC Meeting – Review audits
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet
- + 1st Quarter Compliance Reports due from Regions/CVBs
- + Updated FY11 Revenue Projections to Regions/CVBs
- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs

NOVEMBER 2010

- + Region/CVB meeting (two ½ days)
- + 2nd Quarter payment to Regions/CVBs
- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs

DECEMBER 2010

- + Schedule and perform audits for Regions/CVBs
- + Post Lodging Facility Use Tax revenue collection figures to Intranet

APPENDIX: BACKGROUND AND INDUSTRY INSIGHT

CURRENT TRAVEL INDUSTRY TRENDS

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- + U.S. recession is the deepest in 50+ years (Global Insight)
- + Consumer Confidence Index hit new lows in February (The Conference Board)
- + Domestic travel was down 1%
 - + 2008 ended with a 2% decline in room demand and RevPar and legacy airlines down 6% in passengers
- + International travel boosted U.S. tourism most of 2008, but declined 9% in November alone
- + Tourism industry deteriorated significantly in 4th quarter of 2008

NATIONAL OUTLOOK

- + Revised travel forecast of 3.5% decline in domestic leisure travel and 5.6% decline in business/convention travel
- + Overseas travel expected to fall 4%
- + Hotel RevPar down 6% to 11%
- + 7% decline in travel expenditures
- + 200,000 travel-related jobs lost in 2008; another 247,000 projected jobs lost in 2009 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce)
- + In February, leisure travelers' intent to take a trip and the Traveler Sentiment Index climbed upward

NATIONAL TRENDS

- + Trading down but not out
- + Consumers are wheeling and dealing; looking for the bargains
- + Looking for ways to economize (e.g. traveling closer to home, shortening stays, cheaper accommodations, booking trips later, etc.)

MONTANA PERFORMANCE

- + 2008 non-resident visitation – 6.4%, with travel expenditures down 6.2%
- + International travel – primarily Canadian travel – was strong
- + 2008 ended with a 2.3% decline in rooms sold
- + Gasoline averaged \$4.21/gallon in July
- + Summer bed tax revenue (3rd quarter) was down 1% over 2007
- + Airline deboardings increased 2.9%
- + Skier visits were up 14.5%
- + Comparison of 2008 July-August Visitation to 2005 July-Aug Visitation

- + Length of stay decreased by nearly a day
- + Upper-income visitors (\$100,000-\$120,000) increased 10%
- + First-time visitors increased to 44% compared to 26% in 2005
- + Daily visitor spending dropped 15%

MONTANA OUTLOOK

- + 2% decrease in nonresident visitation in 2009
- + 0.5% increase in 2010; 1.3% increase in 2011
- + Canadian travel may decline from 2008 levels
- + Overseas travel may be better than projected
- + Gasoline is currently \$1.93/gal
- + ITRR Outlook Survey determined more than a quarter of tourism business owners are expecting a decline in business

TRAVEL TRENDS

- + Nature-based travel increasing
- + Sustainable/Green/Geotourism travel increasing; people more aware/conscience
- + Climate Sightseeing – a growing number of travelers are moved to visit destinations threatened by climate change; e.g., the Galapagos, Machu Picchu, etc. (American Express)
- + Social Media is becoming a very important part of the marketing mix, but role in the marketing mix needs to be well thought out
- + Authentic Travel (experiencing destination more authentically) and Niche Tours (traveling with like-minded people) increasing
- + Tried and True Travel – travelers returning to destinations they know and love
- + Flashpacking – opting for low-cost carriers and trains, but has ditched the group sleeping arrangements in favor of perks such as a private room, flat-screen TV, etc.
- + Return to camping